



PHOTO CREDIT: LESLIE GREGORY

## CONSERVING MONROE'S MAJESTIC BASIN POND

*Partnership with the town safeguards 350 acres on the Marsh Stream*

**C**oastal Mountains Land Trust is partnering with the Town of Monroe to ensure that their 350-acre Basin Pond property will be permanently conserved.

This highly scenic property sits along the eastern shore of Basin Pond and includes wetlands and shoreline on the Marsh Stream, which drains into the Penobscot River. The goal of the project is to permanently conserve Basin Pond to prevent future development or logging from impacting the spectacular wildlife and recreation resources the property provides. The Land Trust will own the property in perpetuity, maintain it in its natural state, and manage its existing trail system for hiking, mountain biking, and low-impact recreation.

Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has identified Basin Pond as a significant wildlife habitat, specifically for inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat, Brook trout habitat, and a deer wintering area. The property provides extensive habitat for birds and animals, including beaver, muskrat, moose, and several species of frogs.

Monroe's Conservation Commission has developed an impressive network of over four miles of trail at Basin Pond used by hikers, mountain bikers,

cross-country skiers, and people accessing the pond for swimming, fishing, or kayaking. The trails wander through the forest, along the shore of the pond, and along the edge of the Marsh Stream to provide visitors with views of nearby hills and the extensive wetland complex along the river. It is estimated that 500–600 visitors per year visit Basin Pond.

Funding for the project is coming from a settlement that is the result of a lawsuit brought by the Maine People's Alliance and the Natural Resources Defense Council, that has Mallinckrodt, owner of the former Holtrachem chemical plant in Orrington, paying to remediate the plant's mercury contamination of the Penobscot River in the 1960s and '70s. Under the Consent Decree, Mallinckrodt must provide \$20 million for beneficial environmental projects intended to help offset the damage to the Penobscot River Estuary and its surrounding communities.

This grant funding provided us with a unique opportunity to conserve this special place. Thanks to the backing of Monroe's residents who voted in support of this partnership, this area will be protected forever.



## A SUMMER OF STEWARDSHIP

*Intern reflections on what it takes to care for our trails and preserves*



*Eleanor Greer, Knox County Intern, raking blueberries on Beech Hill*

As a rising college senior, the pressure to accumulate meaningful career-driven experiences is high, but not often accessible. Internships can take students far and wide, forcing us to find and pay for housing and personal expenses for little to no pay. Without these experiences on resumes, it is easy to feel like you are falling behind as you enter the postgraduate world. I feel very lucky that Coastal Mountains Land Trust offered me experience related to my field of study in my hometown with grant funding for 400 hours of paid work. This opportunity was incredibly meaningful, since I experienced the positive impact of the Land Trust in the community I grew up in.

As an Environmental Studies major at Pitzer College, land conservation and management are common topics in the classroom. I loved being able to apply this knowledge at Coastal Mountains Land Trust, while continuing to learn more about conservation. As a Stewardship Intern, the bulk of my work focused on maintaining the preserves and other conserved lands in Knox County with the support of Ryan O'Neill, Coastal Mountain's Knox County Preserve Manager.

I have learned that stewardship can look like a multitude of things and, though often not the flashiest role in land conservation, it is indispensable. Trimming the grass on overgrown preserves is just a small part of what land stewards do. During my internship I practiced various management strategies of invasive species, such as efforts to mitigate the impacts of the hemlock woolly adelgid. I also learned about the ways trails are made sustainable and accessible. During trail crews, we built water bars for drainage, installed steps, cleared corridors, and laid down gravel. I also learned about the Land Trust's conservation easements and how they are monitored.

What I also learned while working for the Land Trust is the importance of the delicate relationships that are built around the efforts of land conservation. Important conversations happened every day. I listened in on many and even participated in some. I am so grateful for my time spent at Coastal Mountains Land Trust. The team is fantastic and I will miss working with them, but I feel so grateful for all the skills and lessons I have learned and can take with me in my future.



## CULTURE MATTERS

I think the thing I am most proud of at Coastal Mountains Land Trust is the friendly and collaborative relationship that exists between our board, staff, volunteers and the members that make our work possible. Whether carpooling to visit future conservation properties together, reading through reports at a finance committee meeting, or gathered together for a concert at Beech Hill, there is always a lot of laughter that goes along with the hard work that makes conservation happen.

As I work to put together the initial draft of our organization's next strategic plan, which will guide us through 2030, I am keenly aware of how important it is for us to maintain and foster the positive culture that characterizes our organization. At our Land Trust, I have always enjoyed saying "we are *for* things..." because positivity is such a strong catalyst for making things happen.

No one is more important to our culture than our Board of Directors — a group of 15 committed volunteers from throughout our service region who dedicate an absolutely incredible amount of time and energy in support of our mission. As the end of 2024 approaches, Coastal Mountains Land Trust is proud, albeit a little sad,

to celebrate the departure of five incredible individuals who have collectively served for 29 years on our board.

We are deeply grateful to **Emily McDevitt** for championing trails, community engagement and fundraising efforts including the Round the Mountain Campaign, **David Noble** for his wise counsel as a member of our Land Protection and Building Committees, **Maiara Rebordao** for her energy and music in support of the Waldo County Conservation Initiative, **Roger Rittmaster** for his years extending the reach of our community engagement programs, as well as his work on various committees and as Secretary, and **David Thanhauser** for his deep commitment to the conservation of Hurds Pond and to engaging landowners in Waldo County.

Their dedication and leadership will leave a lasting mark on our organization, and their contributions will continue to inspire and guide us for many years to come.



Ian Stewart



Emily McDevitt



David Noble



Maiara Rebordao



Roger Rittmaster



David Thanhauser



## A CLASSROOM WITHOUT WALLS

*Local community brings teachers' vision for the "River Walk Classroom" to life*

If you walk behind Camden Rockport Middle School (CRMS) you will behold a brand-new classroom — without a roof! This open-air teaching space is extremely accessible to teachers, as it sits directly behind the school in a hemlock grove overlooking the Megunticook River.

Coastal Mountains Land Trust's Learning Landscape program has been designed to minimize barriers to outdoor learning by responding to the visions of teachers. The "River Walk Classroom" was envisioned by Elphie Owen, the school's Math intervention specialist and ecology club leader. John Dietter, the school's innovative seventh-grade science teacher, joined Elphie in crafting this vision while the project was also carried forward with the support and dedication of the CRMS principal, Jaime Stone.

The Land Trust staff worked with the school to map out an educational space that emphasizes the beauty of their landscape and offers a space to teach *all* subjects, providing the opportunity for students to be outside multiple times throughout their school day. Nestled in a hemlock grove, our hopes are for the biodiverse classroom to provide mental health and emotional benefits not found indoors.

This project would not have been possible without an incredible outpouring of community support. Local craftsman and longtime Land Trust volunteer, John Powers, drew the initial design for the chalkboard. Tamarack Builders donated their time and materials to craft it, upcycling some of the timbers and roofing from other projects. On installation day, Tamarack brought most of their team to the school to help Land Trust volunteers install it. Treeworks, a local arborist company, cut and delivered stump seating, and donated about 40 yards of woodchips for the surrounding area to protect the forest floor from compaction. West Bay Rotary of Camden provided funding for the slate board, which was quarried and sold at a discount by Sheldon Slate of Monson, Maine. The fact that all the materials were sourced from Maine and built by locals speaks to the homegrown, community-oriented nature of the project.

Coastal Mountains Land Trust is delighted to have helped facilitate Camden Rockport Middle School's vision for providing increased outdoor learning opportunities directly on their campus. Stay tuned for our next Learning Landscapes outdoor classroom project!





# 2024 CONSERVATION AND VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



David accepts award with daughter, Hannah and wife, Cloe at the Annual Meeting

**David Thanhauser, Board Member**, for his long-term service in support of the conservation of Hurds Pond and the Meadow Brook Preserve. Since approximately 2010, David has been the primary force in securing land on and around Hurds Pond in Swanville, particularly in the acquisition of more than 250 acres that make up the *Rocky Knoll Tract*, *Sucker Brook Tract*, *Bessey Tract*, and *Bormet Tract* of the Meadow Brook Preserve. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors and Land Protection Committee, David hosted dozens of gatherings for the community on his land, all relating to conservation and enjoyment of the outdoors. As he terms off of the Board, his leadership, vision, and tireless effort leave a legacy in safeguarding natural spaces protected by the Land Trust.

## CONNECTING COMMUNITY & NATURE AWARD

**Haley Norris, Cornerspring Montessori Lead Lower Elementary Teacher**, for fostering the next generation of conservationists and capturing, through a documentary, her students' year-long exploration of conservation, connection with the natural world, and work of the Land Trust.

**Tamarack Builders, General Contractors**, for their partnership, generosity, and enthusiasm in building the outdoor classroom for the students at Camden-Rockport Middle School.

**Tim Shaw, local photographer**, for his many years of sharing his beautiful nature photography with the Land Trust to use to connect all our members near and far from the Midcoast to the natural wonders on our preserves.

## ZWARTJES VOLUNTEER AWARD

**Bob Olfenbuttel, Waldo County Volunteer**, for his reliability and enthusiasm volunteering on the Belfast work crew, monitoring at Main Stream Preserve, helping with events, and so much more for over a decade — including being present for the initial stewardship and trail work on over ten preserves in Waldo County.

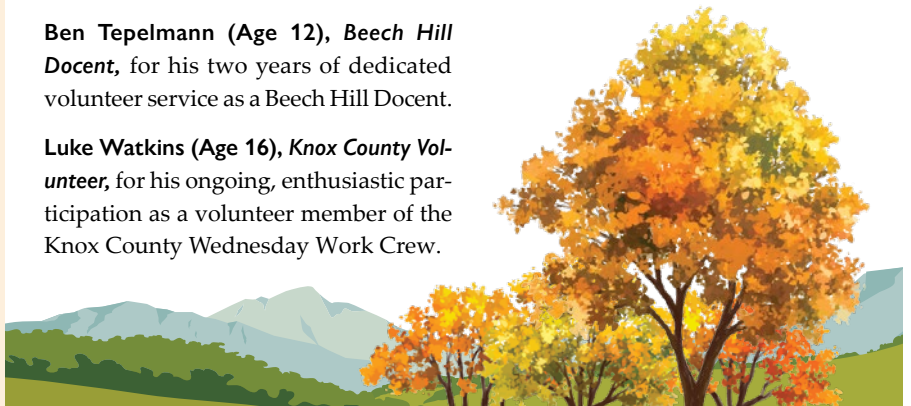
**Matt Janicki, Beech Hill Docent**, for his 10+ years of volunteer service welcoming visitors from near and far as a Beech Nut docent.

**Steve Bird, Waldo County Volunteer**, for his dedication to the Belfast work crew, being a preserve and easement steward for nearly a decade, hosting a chainsaw safety training at his farm in Belfast, and lending his tools, time, and sweat to many many many Land Trust projects.

## YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD

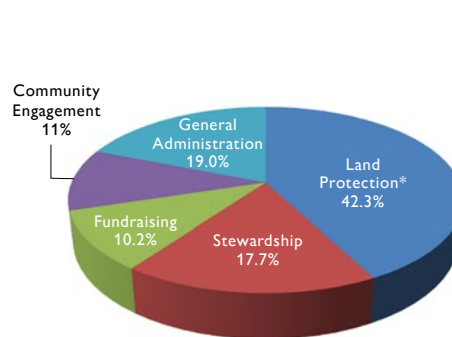
**Ben Tepelmann (Age 12), Beech Hill Docent**, for his two years of dedicated volunteer service as a Beech Hill Docent.

**Luke Watkins (Age 16), Knox County Volunteer**, for his ongoing, enthusiastic participation as a volunteer member of the Knox County Wednesday Work Crew.

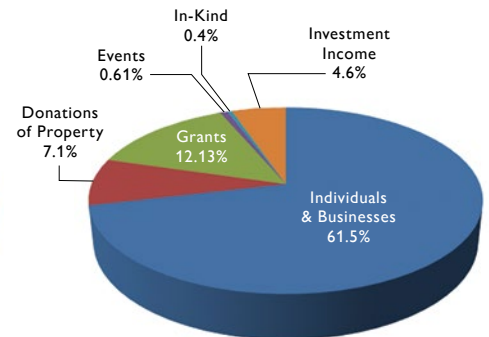


## FY2023–2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

This was another great year for the Land Trust, with several new land acquisitions, programs, and projects taking place. Thank you to all our members for your fantastic support that balances the ongoing needs and growth of our organization. A complete set of our financial statements including Form 990 are available on our website.



PROGRAM EXPENSES



PROGRAM INCOME

\* Land Protection is the combined cost of acquisition activity and the assessment of "land impairment," which is the value of the permanent conservation restrictions placed on the land.



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*Mergus serrator,*  
Red-breasted merganser  
PHOTO CREDIT: TIM SHAW

## MAINE TRAILS BOND

*November 2024 ballot item to invest trails statewide*

This November, Maine voters will have an opportunity to vote for the Maine Trails Bond, a proposal to invest \$30 million over four years in the design, development, and maintenance of trails statewide. Administered by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, this competitive grant funding will support towns, clubs, and organizations like Coastal Mountains Land Trust in efforts to create and maintain

accessible and sustainable trails for the community. Learn more about this ballot item here:



<https://www.nrcm.org/programs/forests-wildlife/maine-trails/>

### *Serving the communities of*

Rockport, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville, Northport, Belfast, Belmont, Morrill, Waldo, Swanville, Brooks, Knox, Searsport, Stockton Springs, and Prospect

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LANDSCAPES